

# ACCELERATING

AIR FORCE SBIR/STTR *through* DoD INNOVATION TEAM PARTNERSHIPS



SMALL BUSINESS INNOVATION RESEARCH  SMALL BUSINESS TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER

## **The Air Force Small Business Innovation Research/Small Business Technology Transfer Program** is leveraging multiple technology accelerators to deliver critical future tools to the warfighter.

Special topics introduced in the 2018 Spring BAA by the Air Force SBIR/STTR Program include several topics created and managed through partnerships with innovative organizations, such as AFWERX and the Office of the Secretary of Defense's MD5.

In many cases, small businesses selected for the special topics will go through a technology accelerator facilitation with one of these organizations or with the Air Force Research Laboratory. The pathway is similar to one followed by commercial startups.

### **DoD Innovation Organizations**

- **AFWERX** – Established in 2017 by the Secretary of the Air Force, AFWERX is a catalyst for agile Air Force engagement across industry, academia, and non-traditional contributors to create transformative opportunities and foster an Air Force culture of innovation. Its technology startup accelerator is a boot camp for small businesses that offers high impact mentorship, and a fast-paced curriculum, guiding promising teams through the processes of problem/solution validation and business model validation.
- **MD5** – Born out of a summer study at New York University in 2015, the National Security Technology Accelerator concept was transformed into the MD5 program office at the height of the Defense Innovation Initiative. Like its sister organizations, the Defense Innovation Unit, Experimental (DIUx), and the Strategic Capabilities Office (SCO), MD5 represents divergent thinking and executes non-traditional approaches to problem solving that increase the permeability between the public and private domains.
- **AFRL** – Leads the discovery, development and delivery of warfighting technologies for the U.S. air, space and cyberspace forces. Through unparalleled research, tomorrow's technology and strategic partnerships, AFRL gives our warfighters unmatched advantage in the field. Balancing a legacy of success with a pursuit of innovation, AFRL is uniquely positioned to support the warfighter's urgent needs and evolving demand to defend America. Among a number of innovation efforts, AFRL has been running technology accelerators and is conducting three separate accelerators around SBIR Special Topics of PNT, Human-Centered ISR and Data Analysis for Space.

## DAVID SHAHADY

Air Force SBIR/STTR Program Director  
[david.shahady.1@us.af.mil](mailto:david.shahady.1@us.af.mil)

## RYAN HELBACH

AFRL Chief Intrapreneur  
[ryan.helbach.1@us.af.mil](mailto:ryan.helbach.1@us.af.mil)

### Special Topics

During the 2018 Spring BAA, the Air Force SBIR/STTR Program began to allocate resources toward special topics. These special topics — which differ from traditional SBIR/STTR topics in multiple ways — are intended to accelerate the development technology of while reducing barriers for small businesses and leveraging new methods of doing business.

Special topics allow the Air Force SBIR/STTR Program to act more as a commercial seed fund. Among the differences from traditional proposals, the special topics involve:

- An application process that requires a five-page technical proposal and 15-page “pitch” (slide) deck, instead of the traditional 20-page technical proposal;
- Phase I contract awards of up to \$50,000 and a three month period of performance, compared to \$150,000 and nine months; and
- Numerous awards for each Phase I, which are typically limited to only two awards.

Future topics will include:

- Leveraging MD5’s innovation and entrepreneurial programs to pull technologies and intellectual property out of the DoD Laboratories and into small businesses;
- Focusing on ways to rapidly introduce proven commercial technologies at a low cost to improve overall government processes through open innovation calls; and
- Ties into the Air Force Technology Transfer mission by funding feasibility studies and planning efforts. Phase I winners would be “loaned” an Air Force intellectual property to build a business case around while Phase II winners would further develop and prototype the technology. Successful companies could begin commercial sales by obtaining the proper Air Force license for the IP.

The six special topics introduced in the 2018 Spring BAA by the Air Force SBIR/STTR Program were just the first step in a larger effort. There are plans to continue to grow the number of topics and experiment with ways to drive benefits for the warfighters and small businesses.



[WWW.AFSBIRSTTR.AF.MIL](http://WWW.AFSBIRSTTR.AF.MIL)  
[AFSBIRSTTR-INFO@US.AF.MIL](mailto:AFSBIRSTTR-INFO@US.AF.MIL)